REMARKS

Claims 1-2 and 4-15 are pending in this application. Claims 1-2 and 11 have been amended and new claims 13-15 have been added. None of the foregoing amendments adds new matter.

Applicants note that the previous recitation of "clearance" of claim 1 and similar definitions of claims 2 and 11 is replaced by more functional limitations. Typically, Fig. 3 of the application shows that the distance between the lower face 38U of the ear of metal element 32 and the upper surface of ring assembly 31 is far larger than the radial thickness of resilient member or retainer 44.

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below to schedule a personal or telephone interview to discuss any remaining issues.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 01-2300, making reference to Attorney Docket No. 107348-00137.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert K. Carpenter
Registration No. 34,794

Customer No. 004372
ARENT FOX KINTNER PLOTKIN & KAHN, PLLC
1050 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036-5339
Tel: (202) 857-6000
Fax: (202) 638-4810
RKC/tdd